

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ALGIER 00919 101201Z
ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 SP-02 INR-05
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R 091630Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6253
INFO AMCONSUL ORAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 0919

LIMDIS

EXIM FOR CLAYTON NORRIS AND CHARLES BECKER

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: ENRG, ECRE, BENC, AG
SUBJECT: STONE AND WEBSTER PROJECT AT HASSI R'MEL IN TROUBLE

REF: (A) ALGIERS 722, (B) ORAN TO ALGIERS MEMO 30 MAR 77

1. IN PARA 11 REFTEL EMBASSY STATED THAT STONE AND WEBSTER GAS TREATMENT PLANT AT HASSIR R'MEL WOULD BE NEEDED BY FEBRUARY, 1978, TO SUPPLY NEEDS OF LNG I GAS LIQUIFICATION PLANT BEING BUILT BY BECHTEL. AS RESULT OF INCREASINGLY DISTURBING RUMORS THAT HASSI R'MEL PLANT WOULD NOT RPT NOT BE READY IN TIME, EMBASSY HAS CONSULTED WITH SEVEN DIFFERENT KNOWLEDGEABLE INDUSTRY SOURCES TO SOLICIT THEIR OPINION. ALL SOURCES ESSENTIALLY AGREE: GIVEN CURRENT TALENT AND RESOURCES BEING DEVOTED TO PROJECT, IT EXTREMELY UNLIKELY THAT STONE AND WEBSTER WILL COMPLETE GAS TREATMENT PLANT ON TIME. ONE SOURCE QUOTED SONATRACH OFFICIAL AS SAYING PROJECT WAS ABOUT TO BE TAKEN AWAY FROM STONE AND WEBSTER.

2. IT APPEARS THAT FEBRUARY 1978 ESTIMATE FOR RE-
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QUIREMENT OF GAS (REFTEL) IS APPROXIMATELY ACCURATE; ALTHOUGH ONE SOURCE PUTS DATE AS LATE AS MAY, 1978 (REFMEMO). PLANT WAS TEN PERCENT COMPLETE WHEN PRITCHARD HANDED OVER TO STONE AND WEBSTER MID-DECEMBER 1977. PLANT NOW APPROXIMATELY SEVENTEEN PERCENT COMPLETE, AND MOST OPTIMISTIC ESTIMATE OF CURRENT COMPLETION RATE IS THREE AND

HALF PERCENT PER MONTH. COMPLETION RATE OF AT
LEAST SIX AND HALF PERCENT PER MONTH WOULD HAVE TO BE
ATTAINED AND MAINTAINED IN ORDER MEET FEBRUARY
DEADLINE. NONE OF SEVEN SOURCES CONSULTED BELIEVED SUCH A
RATE WITHIN STONE AND WEBSTER'S CAPABILITIES AS
DEMONSTRATED HERE THUS FAR.

3. MOST, THOUGH NOT ALL, SOURCES AGREE THAT
SITUATION NOT RPT NOT HOPELESS. FORTY PERCENT OF
CONCRETE HAS BEEN POURED, ENGINEERING IS ENTIRELY COMPLETE
AND MAJORITY OF EQUIPMENT IS ON SITE. IN ADDITION,
MUCH OF REMAINING WORK IS SUCH THAT IT CAN BE DONE UNDER
FLOODLIGHTS USING MULTIPLE SHIFTS. FOR INDUSTRY
OBSERVERS QUESTION SEEMS TO BE WHETHER STONE AND WEBSTER
CAN AND WILL GEAR UP AND GENERATE DRIVE, RESOURCES AND
TALENT NECESSARY TO COMPLETE PLANT OF THIS
COMPLEXITY UNDER ALGERIAN CONDITIONS. LYNE

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